

THE BULLET TRAIN

I'm high in the can and somebody taps. I stomp on the flush pedal and see lights -- blurred snow and rails -- streaking beneath. Staring, foot depressing the pedal, I feel my teeth ache with the inrush of cold. Smoke gone, I wash my hands of its smell, go back to the coach to sit among businessmen, watch the stream of us slam in and out of mountains past cities over fields and into mountains past cities over fields and into mountains past cities over fields and into.

HAIKU

Winter lets the cats
watch me type. Spring sheds hairs that
clog the selectric.

TRANSLATING HASEGAWA

"Would you mind picking out two or three of your best poems so I can translate them?" This question earned me a blank stare, so I asked it again. "The best?" he asked incredulously. "What do you mean?" "The ones you like the most." "The ones I like the most?" he snapped. "I love them all and hate them all. What did you think?" The toes went down easily, but I nearly gagged on my heel and was sure glad to get to the ankle. Hasegawa ordered us both a double. "It's okay," he said in English. Down the bar I saw another American, smirking tolerantly, ask a Japanese, "So you love your wife, huh?"